

July 24, 2007

GRAVES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

LOCAL/STATE BOARD FACILITIES HEARING REPORT

Two local/state hearings were held at the Graves County Board of Education, 2290 State Route 121 N., Mayfield, KY on July 10, 2007 and July 24, 2007. Both hearings began at 5:30 PM (CDT). The purpose of the hearings was to propose a new District Facility Plan developed by the Graves County Local Planning Committee. The Local Planning Committee (LPC) voted 8-6 in favor of the proposed new plan and the Board voted 3-2 to approve the new plan.

There were (21) twenty-one individuals in attendance at the first meeting and (59) at the second meeting.

COMMENTS

Grover Canty, hearing officer, called the public hearing to order. The hearing officer outlined the purpose of the hearing procedures in accordance with 702 KAR 1:001. It was explained that those persons wishing to speak would be given the opportunity and that written statements would be accepted. It was also noted that all considerations will be made available to the Kentucky Board of Education via the hearing officer's report. The hearing officer provided copies of the proposed new District Facility Plan to all attendees that includes: **Priority Number One - a New Elementary School to replace Fancy Farm and Lowes Elementary and Phase I District Technology Initiative; Priority Number Two - renovations and additions to Graves County High School, Central Elementary, and Farmington Elementary Schools and Renovations to Cuba Elementary and Wingo Elementary Schools and Phase II District technology Initiatives. There were no projects listed in Priorities Three and Four. There were several discretionary projects listed in Priority Number 5.**

The floor was opened to those who wished to make a statement. At the first meeting two letters (Michelle Palmer and Tom Wood) were read by the hearing officer. These two letters and two articles written in the Paducah Sun Newspaper were documents entered in the hearing record supporting the proposed plan. These letters and articles felt the districts facility plan was a good plan for Graves County Schools. Five people spoke at the first hearing (Joe Elliott, Greg Wilkerson, Jack Wilkerson, Glenn Hayden and Ella Dean Hayden) and 24 spoke at the second hearing. These totals include three people who spoke at both hearings. Twenty-two of these people who spoke expressed opposition to the plan. Copies of 15 of these talks or letters submitted into the record are available upon request. There were 56 form letters opposing the consolidation, a petition bearing 1700 signatures, an editorial by Bob Spillman and a lengthy letter from Joseph H. Barrows, an attorney for Citizens Against Consolidation, all available upon request. The letter from Mr. Barrows for the most part summarizes everything that was said at the hearing. Four letters in favor of consolidation are available upon request and two people spoke in support of the district facilities plan. Testimony at the July 24 hearing lasted three hours and 45 minutes. **Recordings of the proceedings are available at the Division of Facilities Management.** Comments opposing the proposed plan may be categorized as follows:

- a. Desire to keep the 2002 Facilities Plan that called for two new schools. Said when Central Elementary was built the local board sent 30 Fancy Farm Students to the new school affecting the numbers at Fancy Farm. This is part of the reason Fancy Farm now only has 230 students. Cited the board had violated the Open Meetings Law, Open Records Law, Public Notice requirements and had given contradictory remarks.
- b. Indicated Lowes was being put on the back burner in past years. Wanted to finish the 2002 Facilities Plan. Stated smaller schools do much better than the larger schools and loved the smaller class sizes at Lowes.
- c. Said the Facilities Committee was a stacked deck. Questioned if the local board had its priorities in the right place. Said board spent a million dollars on the football stadium. Questioned how Lowes had a facilities evaluation rating of 3 in 2002 and a rating of 5 in 2007.
- d. Questioned the makeup of the LPC. Stated there were members on the committee that did not live in Graves County. Felt there was a conflict of interest with one member (a bank president which the board did business with) on the LPC and did not like the fact that Mr. Pearce was appointed by Mr. Link and not elected to the committee.
- e. Said that Fancy Farm was the perfect location for the school; the board would save money on utilities, excavation, etc. thus saving millions of dollars.
- f. Commented that the plan is against the long standing policy of community schools and listed attributes of going to a small community school.
- g. Said the proposed Facility Plan was adopted through a local planning process that violated regulations governing the development and approval by the LPC.
- h. Claimed the local facility plan contains inaccurate student capacity and enrollment data.
- i. Felt the Kentucky Department of Education (Facilities Division) has inappropriately driven the local planning process.
- j. Stated that this District Facilities Plan will negatively impact the communities of Fancy Farm and Lowes and the Graves County System.

An analysis of these comments reveals that most of these issues and concerns were raised in all of the (27) testimonies. Many stated they believed everything said prior to them and they were opposed to consolidation. Others were more specific and addressed most of the issues listed above.

Further analysis of these comments reveals that the issues and concerns raised during these two public hearings have either been discussed or considered by the Local Planning Committee during previous public forums and committee meetings or were issues outside the scope of this committee. The only testimony not mentioned in previous meetings was the fact that three of the

LPC members did not live in the school district and should not be able to serve, but examination of the law reveals no provisions requiring residence in the school district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the new District Facility Plan developed by the Graves County Local Planning Committee and adopted by the Graves County Board of Education be approved as the District Facility Plan for the Graves County School District. A copy of the new plan is attached.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by:

Grover M. Canty, Hearing Officer

Timothy K. Lucas, KDE Fac. Mgmt.

cc: Mark W. Ryles, Director
Planning File

Att.: Graves County School District Facility Plan